



Senate Education Committee

**James N. Goenner, President & CEO
National Charter Schools Institute**

September 7, 2011

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A Nation at Risk Report: The Imperative for Educational Reform

**"The educational foundations of our society are
presently being eroded by a rising tide of
mediocrity that threatens our very future as a
Nation and as a people."**

- April 26, 1983

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How Did We Respond?

1. Some condemned the report and its findings. Some embraced it and initiated reform efforts. Others ignored it.
2. Reform efforts included:
 - Demonstration projects to spread best practices,
 - Restructuring and retooling,
 - Mandates and increased regulation,
 - Threats and exhortation, and
 - More money.
 - None of which have really accomplished the mission.

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What Did We Learn?

1. The pace of change in education is very slow.
2. The educational imperative that our children and our country face is not enough to cause dramatic improvements
3. Having a vision for educational excellence is not enough.
4. Don't put all your reform efforts into one basket.
5. If student performance is going to significantly improve, the educational system has to be changed.

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Who Has the Authority to Change the Educational System?

The Governor and the Legislature

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Michigan's Constitution Makes Public Education a Legislative Priority

*"Religion, morality
and knowledge being
necessary to good
government and the
happiness of
mankind, schools and
the means of
education shall
forever be
encouraged."*

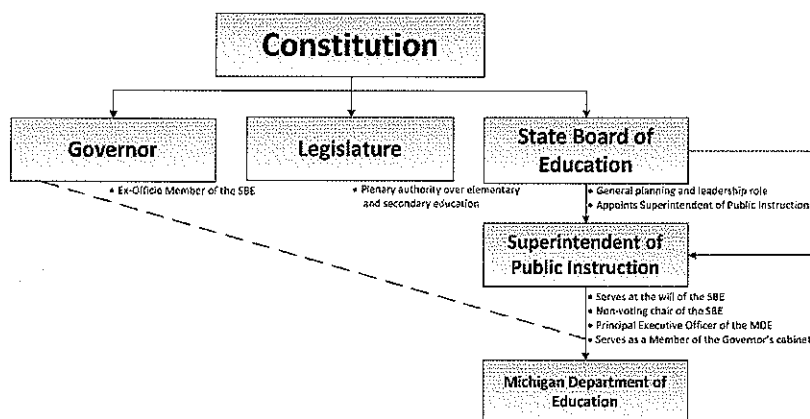
- Article 8, Section 1

*"The legislature shall
maintain and support
a system of free public
elementary and
secondary schools as
defined by law."*

- Article 8, Section 2

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Michigan's Constitution on Education



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The Legislature has plenary authority over education:

- For example, the Legislature has the authority to create or abolish local school districts.¹
- There also is no constitutional requirement that:
 - Schools be under the control of the voters of a school district;²
 - Members of a school district board be elected by the local voters;³ or
 - Members of a school district board be appointed by a public body⁴.

1. Source: Citizen Research Council, Report 359, January 2010, page 4

2-4. Source: Michigan Supreme Court, *Council of Organizations v. Governor*, July 30, 1997, page 15, 17

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How Can the Legislature Use Its Authority to Change the Educational System?

1. Challenge the "givens" of the educational system and remove the exclusive geographical franchises held by districts.
2. Use the powerful dynamics of choice and competition to create the conditions by which excellence thrives and spreads.
3. Empower and involve parents by allowing them to choose from a diverse array of educational options.
4. Enact laws that unleash human creativity and entrepreneurship.

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What Was the Strategy Behind Choice and Charters in 1993?

1. Choice and competition are necessary to force the educational system to change and improve itself over time.
2. Schools should be free and open to all students regardless of where they live or their economic status.
3. The state should fund students, not institutions.
4. Parents should be empowered to choose the schools that best meets the needs of their children and the funding should follow.

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What Has 15 Years of Choice and Charters Taught Us?

1. Parents like choice – approximately 200,000 Michigan students are in a charter or choice school today.
2. Charter schools operate in rural, suburban and urban communities. However, the majority tend to serve urban students.
3. Charter schools have been able to operate with significantly less money than their district counterparts.
4. The status quo is a force to be reckoned with.
5. Charter schools never received the regulatory freedom they were promised – autonomy & accountability often conflict.

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More Lessons From the Past 15 Years

6. Establishing, measuring, and enforcing performance standards is easier said than done. The MEAP has been inadequate for measuring student growth and achievement.
7. Closing schools that don't perform is difficult, but doable.
8. The demand for high performing schools is greater than the supply.
9. Providing access to existing facilities would accelerate reform and benefit taxpayers.
10. America is the real experiment.

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What Are We Trying to Accomplish?

Breakthrough Performance!

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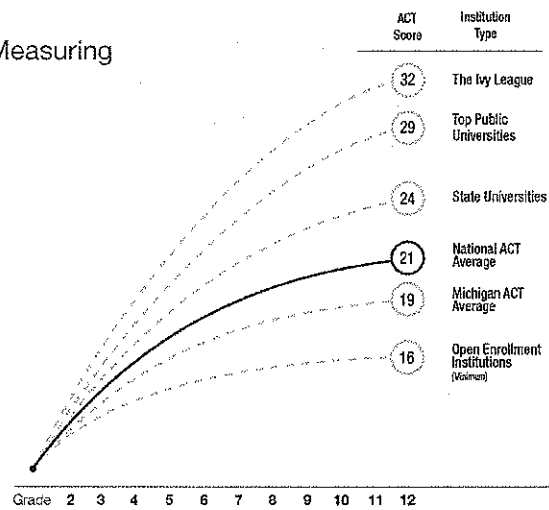
6 Principles for Breakthrough Performance!

1. It's all about performance, performance, performance!
2. Create the conditions where talent, capital and entrepreneurship can thrive.
3. Empower parents with choice and meaningful performance information.
4. Get students to value and take ownership of their education.
5. Recognize and reward performance and productivity.
6. Benchmark the growth and achievement of students beginning in elementary school, against a respected standard like the ACT.

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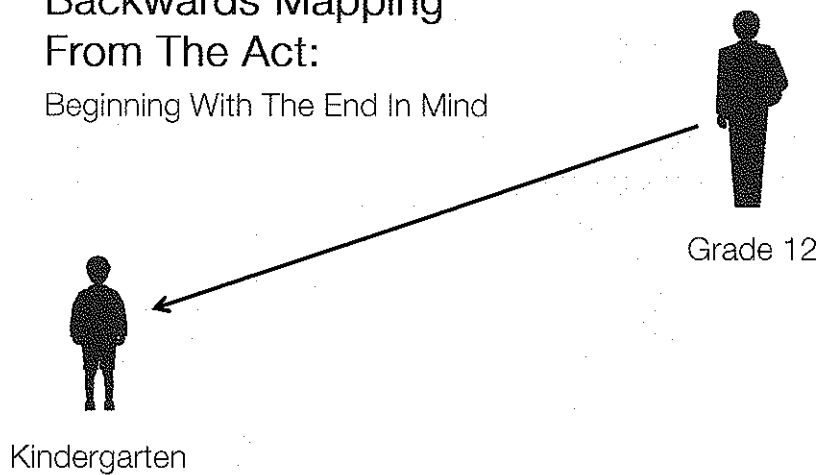
ACT & SAT: Universal Standards for Measuring College Readiness



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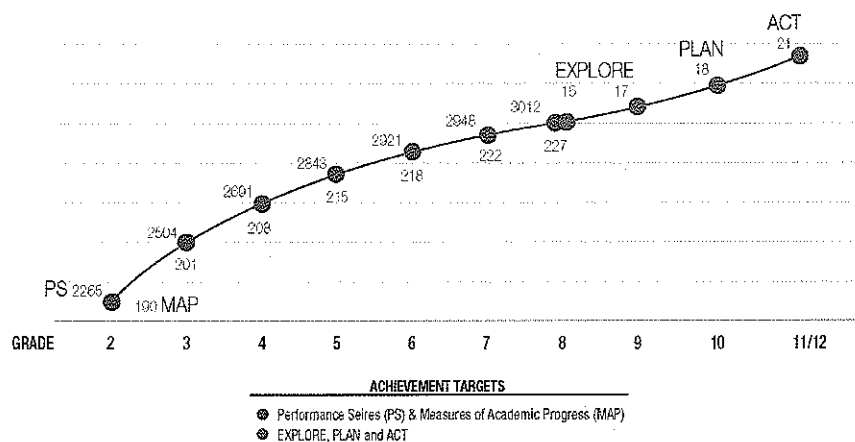


Backwards Mapping From The Act: Beginning With The End In Mind



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Achievement Targets

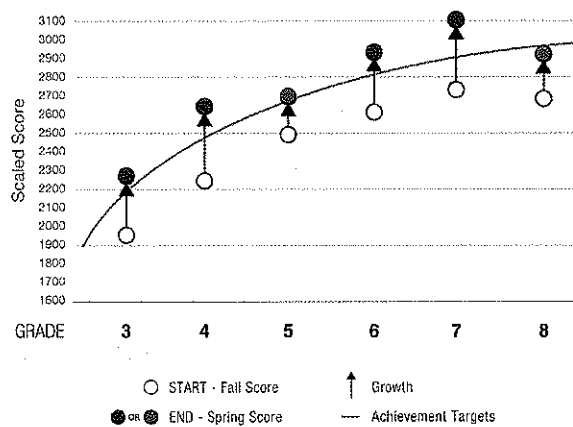


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MEASURING AGAINST THE TARGET

Growth and Achievement



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What Does ACT Recommend to Increase College Readiness?

1. Fewer, but Essential Standards
2. Common Academic Expectations
3. Clarity about what Level of Performance is "Good Enough"
4. Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
5. Early Monitoring & Intervention System to get Students on Target
6. Longitudinal Data System to Ensure Students stay on Target

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Our Imperative:

Preparing all students
academically prepared for
success in college, work and life.

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Our Challenge:

Determining the best course of action
and overcoming the obstacles that
stand in the way of creating a better
educational system for our children
and our country.

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Your Opportunity:

Windows of opportunity of this
magnitude and importance don't
come along very often.

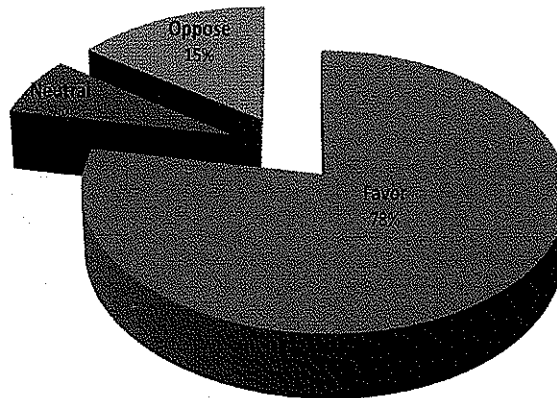
Be Bold!!

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Public Support for Choice is Growing

Do you support more public school options in Michigan?



Source: MRG statewide survey, May 2010, n=600

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Questions & Discussion

THANK YOU!

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